MONTANA
STATE
LIBRARY

This "cover" page added by the Internet Archive for formatting purposes

S
027.0786
H6ma
Fall 2000

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
3 0864 0016 1548 6

NTANA STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

The Montana Archivist

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

FALL 2000

DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

NOV 0 3 2000

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
1515 E. 6th AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

Two SHRAB Regrant Projects Completed

Meagher County Archives/Bair Museum

The Montana State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) regrant projects got underway in July in White Sulphur Springs and Martinsdale. Ellie Arguimbau and Molly Miller, archivists with the Montana Historical Society, each spent two weeks working with the Meagher County Archives in the Castle Museum and the Charles M. Bair Family Museum.

At the Meagher County Archives, the grant provided help to process and catalog county, family, and ranch records so the records will be accessible to historians and genealogists. The archival material of the Meagher County Archives was scattered throughout the Castle Museum and other buildings in White Sulphur Springs, such as the former Presbyterian church where the county tax records are presently housed and the public library where the Smith Brothers Sheep Company records have been housed. Arguimbau spent most of her two weeks helping staff and volunteers locate the material and, using PastPefect museum-archives software, inventorying the collections and entering the information in the computer. The inventory was used to make sure everything was properly accessioned and add information not apparent on the records. A second volunteer with extensive knowledge of Meagher County families checked the accuracy of name spellings and looked for relationships among different family members that might indicate if the records were part of a larger family collection. This job was made easier by the excellent accession records maintained by Fay Fuller. When complete, the computer program will be able to locate gifts, family connections, and other information immediately.

During the second two weeks, Miller and volunteers began the task of physically relocating many of the collections. In the course of moving these materials additional materials were discovered and were added to the inventory. Miller spent several days processing and cataloging collections and instructing Pam Zehntner—

(continued on page 3)

Tobacco Valley Historical Village

The Tobacco Valley Improvement Association (TVIA) Historical Village is comprised of nine historic structures, including a general store, school, church, log cabin, railroad depot, fire tower, and caboose. The museum began in 1971 when the store, depot, and church were moved to the site from "Old" Rexford to preserve them from imminent inundation from Libby Dam. The Fewkes general store building serves as the main museum building, housing the bulk of the collections, much of the archival material, a gift store, and a volunteer-staffed visitor center. The museum is open to the public from Memorial Day to Labor Day each year.

The archival collections are housed in the Fewkes store, with research space available in the historic library building. Additional material, including much of the photograph collection, the oral history collection, and a vertical file collection, are housed at the Eureka Public Library. The Library is located several blocks uptown from the museum. The TVIA staff has made every effort to protect the material while working within a very limited budget.

The museum is the unofficial archives for its governing body, the TVIA, and the TVIA's six independent boards. The private manuscripts collection consists of one large collection and numerous smaller collections. Much of the material was part of the donation that created the museum—the Fewkes store, its contents and records, and Fewkes family papers were donated in 1972. In addition, clubs and societies are well represented in the collection and include records of the First Women's Club of Eureka, the local Cowbelles, and the Modern Woodsmen of the World. There are many records from local businesses such as the Eureka Lumber Company, the Gateway Hotel, and several mercantiles.

The archival collection includes hundreds of photographs, including several panoramic or otherwise oversize photographs and a few photograph albums. There also are dozens of maps and blueprints, many currently tightly rolled.

(continued on page 3)

HOW TO BASICS — Encapsulation

Polyester encapsulation is a method of providing physical support to fragile and brittle documents, which generally are in single-sheet format. Once enclosed in polyester, archival documents may be handled without danger of tearing or suffering from other physical abuse. Polyester encapsulation is readily learned with a bit of practice, and the procedure is *easily reversed* (unlike lamination) by cutting away the tape holding the capsule together. Encapsulated documents may be photocopied or microfilmed directly through the polyester.

The following materials are necessary: Polyester sheets (Mylar Type D or Melinex Type 516), a grid (you can purchase one or make one by taping ¼" graph paper to the underside of a sheet of glass or Plexiglas), double-coated tape (3M No. 415, ¼" or ½" depending on size of document), a soft lint-free cloth (cheesecloth is good), weights, hard rubber brayer or squeegee, and scissors or straightedge and blade.

Polyester is strong, flexible, and relatively inert (it won't give off harmful gases like regular plastics will). Testing at the Library of Congress found 3M Scotch Brand double-sided tape no. 415 the only acceptable tape for encapsulation.

Polyester is available in standard-sized pre-cut sheets as well as in rolls; it also is available in various weights and thicknesses. 3-mil polyester is appropriate for standard– to medium-sized documents; 5-mil should be used for oversized materials such as maps, posters, and blueprints.

Encapsulation of prints, documents, photographs, and other flat paper is accomplished by cutting a piece of polyester larger than the document and placing it on a grid. Measure the item to be encapsulated and apply double-sided tape around the area corresponding to those dimensions, leaving a quarter inch between the document and the tape. The tape ends should be cut square and butted on three corners with no overlap, or the edges can be cut on the diagonal to make a more elegant joint (a mitered corner, for you sewers). Place the document within the boundaries of the tape, being careful not to allow contact with the adhesive. Wipe the second sheet of film with the lint-free cloth and apply the second sheet of film with the cleaned side down and place a weight on the center of the document to hold it in position. Lift one corner of the top sheet of film and carefully peel the protective paper from the tape along one edge of the document. Lower the corner of the film and rub the film over the tape to adhere it. Repeat for the other three edges. To remove air from between the sheets of film, slide the squeegee or brayer across the envelope towards the air gap left in one corner of the envelope. Trim the envelope to size, leaving 1/8" to 1/4" margin of polyester outside the tape on all four edges. rounding the corners of the envelope will prevent scratching or cutting other materials during handling.

Encapsulated documents are held in place in the film envelope by static electricity. The static also helps to hold torn paper together, reducing the need to repair small tears before encapsulation. The static, however, can also lift loosely bound media from the paper. For this reason the technique is inappropriate for documents such as pastel, charcoal, and some pencil. If in doubt, test: if the media lift off on a tiny swab rubbed gently in an inconspicuous spot, the document should not be encapsulated.

Research by the Library of Congress demonstrates that acidic papers may age much faster after encapsulation. If further shows that leaving an air space at the corners of the film package does not slow this aging as was once speculated. Documents should be de-acidified before encapsulation. If this is not feasible, encapsulation may still be desirable to protect very fragile or heavily handled material. The Library of Congress finds that, in such a case, including a sheet of buffered paper the same size and shape as the document to back it in the enclosure can slow the rate of deterioration. *(The next issue of* The Montana Archivist *will contain directions for de-acidifying paper documents.)*

It is important to remember that encapsulation, like any conservation technique, should not be used for every document. The decision to use this strategy to preserve documents should be a matter of informed judgment, weighing the need to support or protect the document against the possibility that chemical deterioration may occur at an increased rate.

From "NEDCC Technical Leaflet" Section 6, Leaflet 5, which can be found in *Preservation of Library & Archival Materials: A Manual,* Third Edition, Revised and Expanded, Edited by Sherelyn Ogden, Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), 1999. For a copy of the complete technical leaflet, write to NEDCC at
100 Brickstone Square
Andover, MA 01810-1494,
call them at 1-978-470-1010,
or visit their website at
<http://www.nedcc.org>.

WSS/Martinsdale *(cont.)*

who serves as the registrar and archival technician for the Meagher County Archives—how to proceed once the traveling archivists were gone. Zehntner also assisted Miller in entering cataloging into the PastPerfect program on the computer as working examples for staff and volunteers to follow in future cataloging The PastPerfect program presents many challenges for archival cataloging, but can be adapted with certain restrictions.

The Meagher County Archives staff will continue the project by identifying the more important or substantive collections, physically moving them to the archives room in the Castle (two rooms in the basement area of the Castle building were recently renovated to store the archival collections), and cataloging them.

Many hours of volunteer labor were donated to make this project possible. Matching money for the project came from a gift from the Jim Short estate.

The Bair Museum had a totally different set of circumstances. The Archives room is located on the ground floor of the 1930s-era mansion, accessed through the kitchen, a closet, and a bathroom. The room is medium-sized and will house both the archives and the work area. The main area of the building is climate controlled, but the Archives room is not.

The archival collection consists of the Bair Family and their various companies, such as the Realty Development Corporation and the Bair Company. As the collection was generated by the owners of the house, there are no accession records and no substantial additions are expected. A number of persons have attempted to organize the papers, which complicated an already complicated order. Arguimbau spent two days surveying the records and outlining a probable organization. Miller spent additional time identifying and establishing the subgroups and ordering the series and folders. The main goal was to determine how to process the collection and teach the volunteers to finish the processing and cataloging.

Both the Meagher County Archives and the Bair Family Museum archives are well on their way to well-organized archives programs. Upon completion of the projects, the archives cataloging will be available at the County Library and on the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) so that researchers can access the information throughout the year.

Eureka *(cont.)*

The oral history collection is completely transcribed and there is an alphabetical listing of the narrators that includes a brief description of topics.

The museum has maintained a donation log since its inception. Loans also are recorded in the book. Since the books are chronological, the staff also created an alphabetical index. Cathryn Schroeder, Board of History president, and volunteer Jim Hannay, spent the previous year identifying and inventorying the archival collection. spreadsheets were created for the photographs, maps and blueprints, club records, general archives, Fewkes store records, and school district collections. Each spreadsheet included a brief description, location, and donor fields; with the commencement of the project, an accession number field was added. This preliminary work proved vital to the success of the project, contributing greatly to the amount of arrangement and description completed.

The first phase of the project was to create appropriate policies and procedures for the archives. A mission statement was drafted, along with policies dealing with collection development, access, photograph duplication, photocopying, on-site duplication, and publication. An accession/deaccession committee was created to screen donations and make deaccession recommendations. Procedures for acquisitions, research, and duplication services were developed. Finally, the group created forms for researcher registration, deaccessions, photograph and photocopy orders, and permission to publish, and updated the museum's deed of gift form.

The second phase of the project was to assign accession numbers and match items with the accession record. Procedures for items "found in the collection" were developed. Volunteers assisted with the numbering and provided much institutional and local memory to match items with donors.

During the last two weeks of the project, Traveling Archivist Anne Foster, Board of History President Cathryn Schroeder, and museum volunteers began processing archival collections. A variety of collections were selected to provide the TVIA staff with examples to follow in future processing. Written finding aids were created for each collection. With the dedication and number of volunteers working on the project, the majority of the museum's current archival collections were arranged and described. Each volunteer had an opportunity to independently process and compose a finding aid for several smaller collections. Copies for finding aids are being sent to the Montana Historical Society for inclusion in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC).

The Montana Archivist

Montana State Historical Records Advisory Board

c/o Montana Historical Society
P.O. Box 201201
Helena, MT 59620-1201

Published Quarterly
Kathryn Otto, Editor

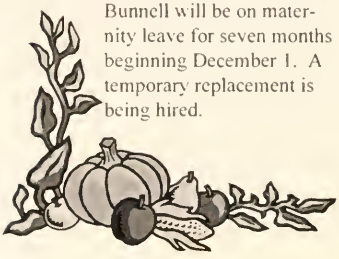
News from Around Montana

Depot Center (Livingston)

Upcoming Events. "Peace by Piece Quilt Show," October 13-15; Blues at the Depot presents an evening with Otis Taylor on October 21; "Who Shot the Sheriff" dinner theatre fundraiser on November 10th; and the Christmas Ball on December 16th featuring the Glen Johnston Swing Band.

University of Montana K. Ross Toole Archives

Staff News. Archivist Jodi Allison-Bunnell will be on maternity leave for seven months beginning December 1. A temporary replacement is being hired.



Western Heritage Center (Billings)

Lewis and Clark Exhibit and Events. "The Journey of Discovery: Following in the Footsteps of Lewis and Clark" is on display at the Western Heritage Center in Billings October 5 – December 29. The exhibit includes 18 oversize panoramic works by internationally-recognized landscape color photographer Brent Phelps, who has been following in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark and creating a record of what the American West looks like today. His panoramic images present striking landscapes and only upon closer viewing does the observer detect evidence of our time, such as houses in the distance, areas of cultivated land, or city skylines. The Center also is sponsoring a related film and lecture series and a photography workshop during October.

Job Openings

Little Big Horn College Archivist

Little Big Horn College is recruiting for a new archivist. Former archivist Magdalene Moccasin took another position in the library.

General Description: A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following: understanding of the Crow community; knowledge of archival processes; oral and written ability to communicate; knowledge of Crow history, language, and culture; history of self-directed work and ability to set and achieve clear goals; ability to deal effectively with issues of cultural sensitivity; research skills; strong attention to details.

Qualifications: BA/BS in Native American Studies, anthropology, history, or a related field. Two years experience in archival work, library science or museums preferred. Two years of supervisory experience preferred.

For more information: Contact Tim Bernardis, Library Director, 406-638-3100 ext. 113 or e-mail him at <tim@lib.lbhc.cc.mt.us>.

Closing Date: October 16, 2000